



The Virginia Defense Force

Bugler



July 2011 Volume 3 Issue 1

On Mission

We are rapidly approaching our target goal of 1,200 troops in the Virginia Defense Force (VDF). Through the continued recruiting efforts of many around the state, the upgraded website and the new Recruiting and Retention Command, we are able to cast a wider net to reach potential recruits. In May, we produced a print media blitz in the Highland area which has generated a good number of inquiries. In the coming months, there will be print media blitzes in other areas of the state as well.

We have many new enlistees and appointees that are digging in with their training to become state-active-duty (SAD) ready. I encourage each and every one of you to brush up on your past training, and if you have not yet completed your SAD-ready training please do so as quickly as you can. The better we are trained, the better we can help our fellow Virginians when the time arises.

VDF Headquarters has completed its initial, but temporary, move to Waller Depot, Richmond, Virginia. Currently, we are stationed in a small part of the armory however, our space accommodations will increase this fall allowing for our permanent move to be accomplished. The patience and understanding from the field during this time is greatly appreciated by Active Detachment (AD) and by me. Good things are happening in AD—the upgraded website, in-house ID card production and faster responses through the email system to name a few. There are many other developments underway, so visit our website often.

I am extremely proud to a member of such a fine team of volunteers. I will gladly continue my efforts to ensure that our organization continues to grow and excel for the citizens of Virginia.



Major General John Taylor

Updates from Active Detachment

June was a bit painful for all of us with the VDF Headquarters location being moved. However, we are in place now at Waller Depot. Many folks helped with this arduous move on their own time during the week.

SFC Carter went way beyond the call of duty in his organization and execution of the move. His tireless efforts was the backbone of the entire mission. Even after moving loads of furniture every day he was on P-14 duty, he would generate orders and perform his other duties as well. SFC Carter is a gleaming example of dedication to all of us in the Virginia Defense Force.

The driving force behind SFC Carter were all of the people that stepped up to help with this move on their own time and with their vehicles:

PVT Kyle E. Clark, *VDF HQ, Active Detachment*

CW2 Thomas W. Kerr, *VDF HQ*

PFC Louis H. Milotte IV, *VDF HQ, Active Detachment*

PFC James Mitchell, *Div HHC*

SFC Ronnie W. Mongold, *VDF Retired*

SFC Melvin Northern, *DTC*

SGT Michael S. Tate, *VDF HQ, Special Staff*

SFC Stuart Townes, *3rd MP Co*

PVT Jim Wallain, *Div G-4 Section*

CW2 Joseph S. Wallace, *Div G-3 at June Drill*

SGT Michael E. Seckman, *Div G-3 at June Drill*

SGT Daniel W. Powell, *Div G-3 at June Drill*

continued on page 2

Table of Contents

From the Editor.....	2
Blackhorse at Winchester Apple Blossom Festival	3
Lafayette - Crossroads of VDF Troops	4
RTI Trains VDF	5
Highland: 183rd RTI Troops Stage Mobile Reception Station.....	6
Military Police Tireless Training and Service....	7



From the Editor

I hope that you are as excited about the new look of the Bugler as I am. I foresee this newsletter being instrumental in the recruiting and retention of VDF members. Dissemination of the Bugler by all of us can assist in promoting the Virginia Defense Force as well as providing knowledge to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Bugler provides further insight into the current status of the VDF from headquarters to our brigades to our units.

One of the major goals for this publication is to expand knowledge of the VDF, both internally and externally, to make the numerous accomplishments and benefits of the VDF and its members known. To that end, we welcome and encourage submissions of articles along with photos for the upcoming issues. Some ideas to consider are highlighting a VDF member, an upcoming event, or how your recruiting efforts are going. Please send in your suggestions that you have for the Bugler to the email address at the end of this article.

We will publish four issues a year: July 31, October 31, January 31 and April 30. Deadlines for submissions are: July 5, October 5, January 5, and April 5. Submissions after these dates will be published in the following issue. There is more detailed information on page 8 and on the VDF website, on the Public Affairs page.

Lastly, many thanks goes to SPC Meredith for her hard work and dedication to the Bugler.

—Captain King, Acting PAO

Updates cont'd from page 1



VDF ID Cards

Most everyone is aware that we have a new ID Card system in place and has been operational since November, 2010. We had an onslaught of hundreds of applications come in all at the same time. We have been working diligently to work out kinks, get caught up and we understand that the wait is frustrating in the field.

The process is not simply receiving the application and photo and cutting the card. The application is reviewed and verified by each applicant's personnel file and the MTO and most applications take about 30 minutes to process to the Pending phase. It is imperative that we check this information for accuracy to be sure everything is correct for each soldier. There are instances where what is on the MTO is not what the field personnel files show, which is not a new problem. Through the ID card process, however, we have been instrumental in making sure that the proper promotion ranks have been reported, and corrected inaccurate information.

MTO

It is important to let Active Detachment now when there is a problem on the MTO for their troops. What is seen on the MTO reflects personnel actions that we have actually received. If you don't see a personnel action reflected within 60 days of submission through your chain, please check with your chain of command to find out the status.

Email and Website

All personnel actions now go to vdinfo@vdfmail.us. The previous '.gov' email has been terminated due to many technical difficulties with it.

The new website has been instrumental of getting information to you in the field. There are more and more online forms being used. It has been reported, however, that there is some confusion about signatures with online forms. Visit the website in the coming weeks with instructions on how to create a digital signature through Acrobat Reader and can be used on our online forms.

By law, digital signatures are as good as a handwritten ones. The one exception, at the moment, is that an ID Card application must have a handwritten signature. To better utilize our online community, it is acceptable to sign the ID Card application digitally and to send a scan of the handwritten signature in a separate jpg file.



Virginia Defense Force Soldiers Deputized In Support of Winchester Apple Blossom Festival

Over 120 soldiers of the Virginia Defense Force (VDF) took to the streets of Winchester in late April to augment Winchester City Police during the annual Apple Blossom Festival.

The festival is attended by over 300,000 visitors and culminates with two parades rivaling the famous Macy's parade in both size and duration. Spearheaded by the Winchester based 33rd battalion, VDF participation included soldiers from the entire Black Horse Brigade whose area of responsibility covers the Northern third of the state.

"Each year we provide valuable security and traffic control resources to the city" said 33rd Battalion commander LTC Larry Devron. "In return, we gain the opportunity to train and test our skills in a real-world environment. The same soldier skills used during the festival would be used if a town or city in the commonwealth was struck by a hurricane or tornado."

The VDF trains for in-state missions that mirror those of their National Guard counterparts and include Military Support to Civil Authority (MSCA) in the event of a natural or man-made disaster in the commonwealth.

In recent years, VDF troops have added FEMA Incident Command System (ICS) courses to their training. "ICS skills will allow our troops to integrate seamlessly with National Guard, law enforcement, and FEMA personnel in the event of a major disaster in the Old Dominion," according to Colonel Richard Downey, Black Horse Brigade Commander.



VDF troops at Apple Blossom Festival, Winchester, Virginia, May 2011.

The Virginia Defense Force is one of 23 state defense forces currently in existence. Its all-volunteer roster of 1,200 officers and troops is made up of both prior service members and state residents with no previous military experience.

For more information about the Virginia Defense Force, please visit www.vdf.virginia.gov. To learn more about joining the Black Horse Brigade, contact 1LT David Cahan S4, 33BN, 703-909-1911 or email cahanvadf@gmail.com.



FEMA

Training Requirements

Each soldier in the VDF must complete the VDF Orientation Course and the VDF Level II Course as soon as possible after enlistment. There is valuable information in these two courses that will give you the basic knowledge of who the VDF is and its functions. In addition, in order to be state-active duty ready, you must complete the FEMA courses IS100, IS200, IS700, and IS800b. The links for all of these courses are on our website at www.vdf.virginia.gov/vsdftraining.html.



Lafayette Brigade: A Crossroads of VDF Troops Serving Hampton Roads

By CPL Terrance Afer-Anderson, PAO, Lafayette Brigade,
10 June 2011

The Lafayette Brigade, comprised of the Headquarters, 21st and 22nd Battalions, consists of dedicated troops from diverse backgrounds; committed to serving the citizens of greater metropolitan Hampton Roads. As Commanding Officer Colonel John Fortune, Jr. puts it, "Lafayette is like a 'soldier symphony,' each troop a unique instrument, finely tuned, and ever-ready to respond to the call to action."

Based at the Norfolk Armory, the Headquarters Battalion serves Southside Hampton Roads, while the 21st and 22nd serve the Eastern Shore and the Peninsula, respectively. Himself a proud Native American, the Colonel adds, "We are a cultural crossroads. We have troops from all walks of life and ethnic, social and professional backgrounds." One need simply attend a Lafayette drill or the recent Fire Training or the Division's FTX to witness first-hand that plain and simple truth.

Recently, several members of the Headquarters Battalion, all civilians with no prior military service, offered their thoughts on their service in the Lafayette Brigade. They included an African-American taxi driver, an Italian-American attorney, a former New Jerseyan who maintains the firing range at Fort Eustis, an affable, female collections officer, and a retired African-American who enjoyed a 30-year career of service at the Portsmouth Naval Medical Center. They were an impressive mix of conscientious, dedicated male and female troops.

Three years ago, E-4 Johnnie Collins was transporting a customer, while listening to ESPN on his cab radio. He heard an announcement about the Virginia Defense Force and the Lafayette Brigade. As fortune would have it, he just happened to be driving by the Norfolk Armory and decided to call.

Former Lafayette CO Colonel Gerald S. Vintinner took the call and invited Collins to stop by. He enlisted that day and has since advanced through the ranks. "It gave me an opportunity to put something in," he said, "and to take something out."

New recruit Captain Christine Andreoli, a successful attorney, joined the Lafayette Brigade in March. Her father, Carmen Andreoli, a former VDF member with the Black Horse Brigade, Manassas, was her own inspiration. "He felt the experience was very rewarding," she said.

Having served for 15 years with the Roselle Park, New Jersey volunteer rescue squad, followed by 21 years of part-time service with the city's police force, E-5 Walter Coscia says, "I am a creature of habit." Volunteer service in the Lafayette Brigade was a natural fit for the New Jersey native.

Coscia makes a living keeping all of the targeting mechanisms at the Fort Eustis firing range in working order. "I'm one of those people," he says, "where I'm out working somewhere... I like where I am." He's been a member of the VDF for 5 years.

"My experience as a Navy wife," says Sergeant Patricia Christopher, "taught me the need to be of help in the community." The congenial collections representative adds she joined the Virginia Defense Force, "To serve honorably as an enlisted member."



A member of the Lafayette Brigade practices with a fire extinguisher during their recent Fire Training. Photo by PVT Nathaniel Hollis



COL Fortune presides over his Symphony of Soldiers at the recent FTX. Photo by PVT Nathaniel Hollis

Crossroads of VDF Troops cont'd from previous page

For Captain Carol King, joining the Virginia Defense Force was plain and simple. Having served in various clinical roles at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital for well more than two decades, King says, "I had a friend who was the medical officer at Lafayette and she was not able to continue in that role." She eagerly filled the void and has just completed all of her class work for the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Training, in fact, is a rich and much anticipated tradition that is anxiously pursued in the Lafayette Brigade. Optional Training Days are well-attended and the troops look forward to honing their emergency preparedness and military skills. The recent Fire Training Day and FTX drew troops from the unit's every battalion. Collins, who missed the FTX only to attend and become certified in a Community Emergency Response Team class, says, the Fire Training was, "An exercise that helped save lives and helped us to save our own lives." He sees the unit's monthly drills

as, "Important, because as soldiers we are supposed to be prepared for any incident that might come along." Coscia concurs. Though he found the FTX "a bit of a challenge," he has attended more than 10 of these exercises and looks forward to every one. He adds, "I see what modern soldiers go through today." He particularly enjoys being in formation with the other troops, serving as a finely tuned instrument in Colonel Fortune's "symphony of soldiers."

When fully-assembled, the Headquarters, 21st and 22nd Battalions of the Lafayette Brigade, cut an impressive, smart image. One can almost hear the moving, rhythmic cadence of a chorus of impassioned military heartbeats, tuned to the same sheet of music. It reveals that the unit is indeed a cultural crossroads, lined with multi-hued professional troops dedicated to being "Virginians serving Virginians."

Raven Tactical International Trains VDF MP Troops

This was instruction for the training and certification of VaDCJS approved Defensive Tactics Instructors. The course was presented by Raven Tactical International (RAVEN) of Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Fernan Vargas, a RAVEN principal, was the primary instructor. Mr. Kevin Cain of Richmond, VA was secondary instructor. A third RAVEN instructor was also on site.

This course was offered to the VDF by RTI free of charge and approved by JFHQ. Normal charge for this course is reported to be \$400.00 per student. The MP BN had five students enrolled, a saving to the Commonwealth of \$2,000.00. The owner of the school, "MASTER" Rick Van Auken, closed the facility (at financial loss) for the weekend to facilitate the instruction.



Students attending and certified:
1SG Frank Ruggles 2MPco,
CPL Philip Baselice 2MPco,
CPL Robert Lenhart 1MPco,
PFC Thomas Mayfield 3MPco, and
PFC Kasui Young 1MPco.





183rd RTI Troops Stage Mobile Reception Station for Statewide Exercise



A group of Soldiers from the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Center set up and operated a mobile reception site May 15 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach as part of the Virginia National Guard's 2011 Mayhem Exercise.

Seven Soldiers were on duty at Fort Pickett providing communication with the Joint Operations Center in Sandston, while 13 Soldiers from various RTI battalions were at SMR to receive and welcome the nearly 200 Soldiers and Airmen of the Virginia Guard Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force Package (CERFP).

The units and servicemembers of the CERFP arrived from throughout the state and the District of Columbia, but for scenario purposes this CERFP was from Indiana and traveled to Virginia in response to a request for emergency assistance.

The event at SMR was the start of a four-day command and control exercise for the Virginia National Guard to train on existing emergency response plans, policies and procedures to ensure it can rapidly respond to the needs of the citizens of the commonwealth in their time of need. Although the Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett is the designated Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration site, the day-long event at SMR was an opportunity to test a mobile reception center to receive and account for units when Fort Pickett is not a practical rallying point.



"The concept is that we could do this anytime, anywhere," said Lt. Col. Bryan Coleman, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 183rd RTI and one of three team commanders on the ground in Virginia Beach. "We've learned a lot and real world events have influenced how we set up this mission."

The three teams were responsible for command, personnel and logistics and made contact with the units as soon as they entered the state to provide them with immediate information. Also on the ground were four members of the Virginia Defense Force, who deployed from Sandston to Virginia Beach with a Tactical Command Package to establish communication for the personnel at the mobile reception site.

"The VDF is an integral part of this mission," Coleman said. "We have internet VOIP, video conferencing, satellite communication, printing and scanning and video and still upload capabilities," said 2nd Lt. Jim Newman, VDF headquarters company commander. "In a real world scenario we would facilitate communication with the JOC and support personnel and logistic reporting."

The TACPAK was set up to run off vehicle and solar power and has the key capability to communicate via satellite if cell phone reception isn't available.

The event in Virginia Beach was a great opportunity to interface with units the VDF is tasked to support, according to Newman.

"We're all learning about each other and how we can assist one another in the mission."





VDF's Military Police Tireless Training and Service for Fellow Virginians



From being trained in the use of oleoresin capsicum (pepper spray) at the Fall FTX at Ft. Pickett, and actually getting an eye or mouth full of the nasty burning spray, to the deployment and striking with the expandable baton (ASP). Whether standing in the armory parking lot practicing the basic traffic direction moves or suiting up with the riot control gear for MACDIS, the Military Police Battalion companies have been extremely busy with training and mission accomplishment.

At the last Division Fall FTX the Battalion engaged in the first training in using pepper spray. In addition to undergoing an extensive classroom presentation on the legalities of using the spray, the MPs also underwent individual exposure. After receiving a dose of spray, each soldier had to perform a series of MP tasks to develop the understanding that even if sprayed they could still continue to protect themselves. Of course, decon followed.

In February this year, all three MP companies came together at the Petersburg armory where they were certified in the use of the ASP expandable baton. The ASP is used by numerous law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth. The instructor for the very physical course was a certified DCJS instructor from the Western Tidewater Regional Jail.

In April the MP Battalion conducted its annual two day MACDIS training. The training began with basic riot baton use and practice. After several hours of classroom and baton training, the training evolved

into the crowd control formations. The formations were mastered easily, but were to be tested at the final exercise later in the weekend. On Sunday morning the MPs suited up in full riot gear; helmets, body armor, shin and forearm guards. The added stress of the extra equipment along with the very physical OPFOR would create a realistic training situation complete with the OPFOR striking and throwing objects directly at the MPs.

Of course, the more usual training of traffic direction, perimeter security with entry control, handcuffing, and vehicle searches is done on a continuing basis in all of the MP companies. MP skills are perishable—use them or lose them!

The MPs are depended upon by the Virginia War Memorial to support their various ceremonies throughout the year. Thirteen 1st MPco troops directed traffic in and around the AO of the VWM for the veteran's Day Ceremony. Again on 30 May, seventeen MPs from 1st and 3rd MP handled the largest crowd in recent years at the Memorial Day Ceremony. And again on 18 June 1st MP was back to support the VWM as they presented the Army's Birthday and Flag day celebration.

In January and February members of 1st and 2nd MP were present at the General Assembly. On 19 January MPs set up a display and stood by to discuss MP capabilities along with members of the Virginia National Guard. The day provided members of the General

Assembly to see and hear about some of the capabilities of the various units of the Department of Military Affairs. On 24 February, three 1st MPs were on hand as a General Assembly resolution was presented to the Adjutant General.





Upcoming Missions

20-21AUG11	JFHQ C2 Exercise
01SEP11	Issue FTX OPLAN
01-02OCT 11	JFHQ C2 Exercise
11OCT11	State Managed Shelter Exercise at Richard Bland College

For more detailed information concerning Upcoming Missions, please visit the website at www.vdf.virginia.gov.

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Simply fold your sheets in half so that the mailing
panel below is showing. Seal the pages for mailing
with a piece of tape, place a stamp on it and mail it!

Do not use staples, the post office will not accept it.

Article Submission Dates

January 31 Issue - January 5

April 30 Issue - April 5

July 31 Issue - July 5

October 31 Issue - October 5

File types accepted:

Word documents or text within an email.

Photos should not be embedded in Word.

Photos should be in as high a resolution as possible.

300dpi is the desired.

There is more detailed information on the website
at www.vdf.virginia.gov/vsdfnews.html

But don't wait! If you have news you want to share!
We welcome you to send in your news as it happens
and post it on the website. Email your submissions to
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Virginia Defense Force

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